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“Lost in the Shuffle: Examining TSA’s Management
of Surface Transportation Security Inspectors”

Good afternoon Chairwoman Jackson-Lee, Ranking Member Dent, and distinguished Members of the subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to visit with you today on this very important topic. As a mass transit security practitioner, I know all too well the challenges of protecting our riding public, employees, and infrastructure.

Let me begin by stating that we support the efforts of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and the intended mission of the Surface Transportation Security Inspector program. We are also encouraged by Administrator John Pistole’s commitment to placing mass transit security on the same priority as aviation security. We look forward to working closely with him as he strengthens TSA’s leadership in this regard.

TSA has taken some positive steps in helping transit agencies secure their systems. Programs like the Peer Advisory Group and the Transit Safety/Security Roundtable are valuable tools that must continue to be used. The Peer Advisory Group, made up of Transit Police and Security Chiefs, is a great forum for the discussion of transit security issues and initiatives. The Roundtable, a joint effort between TSA and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), fosters an open exchange of information between Transit Police, Security, and Safety Chiefs. Through this forum both the TSA and FTA maintain a partnership with their mass transit stakeholders.

Another important TSA component is the reason we are here today, the Surface Transportation Security Inspector program. In this program, TSA has committed resources and personnel designed to enhance the security of our nation’s surface transportation system. Surface Transportation Security Inspectors have a presence today that did not previously exist. They act as local liaisons between TSA and transit agencies, conduct needed assessments via BASE reviews, and ensure that transit agencies follow guidelines and rules established by TSA. While we believe the Surface Transportation Security Inspector program to be a necessary and vital part of transit security, we would like to offer some suggestions for enhancing the program that would increase the effectiveness of Surface Transportation Security Inspectors, in our view.

It is our strong opinion that TSA’s Mass Transit Division should be responsible for managing, directing, and administering the Surface Transportation Security Inspector program, especially for Surface Inspectors who are responsible for duties related to mass transit. Furthermore, the Surface Inspectors should be modal specific and have a background in transit security or transit policing along with an understanding of their application to a transit environment. The current structure, which dictates that Surface

Inspectors report to Federal Security Directors, is not conducive to a focus on mass transit and has fostered a lack of clear and defined roles for Surface Transportation Security Inspectors. We feel that by reporting to Aviation Management the mission, focus, and effectiveness of Surface Inspectors is diluted. Furthermore, we feel that TSA's Mass Transit Division is better suited to understand the specific needs and unique security environment of mass transit agencies, both bus and rail. Additionally, the Mass Transit Division's regular interaction with local transit agencies will allow for enhanced partnerships and networking that will serve to further strengthen the Surface Transportation Security Inspector program. Lastly, we believe that not only will the Surface Inspector's mission focus be better served by reporting to the Mass Transit Division; their training and communication of mass transit security issues throughout TSA will be strengthened and be of greater benefit to all stakeholders. A greater positive impact on transit security can be achieved by deploying well trained and experienced Surface Inspectors who focus specifically on mass transit and answer to TSA Headquarters through the Mass Transit Division.

The final area of TSA's efforts I would like to discuss with you today is rulemaking. There is no doubt that many industries shy away from Federal rulemaking, but here we have a great opportunity to establish guidelines and regulations that will strengthen transit security nationwide while taking into consideration the uniqueness of various transit operations across this country. We firmly believe that this can be accomplished through an open, honest, and positive dialogue between TSA and the transit industry. We cannot stress enough the importance of establishing a partnership between TSA and local transit police and security chiefs in order to develop rules, regulations, and policies that are realistic and have a true positive impact on transit security. No place is there a better opportunity for this than TSA's Peer Advisory Group. This group of experienced transit police and security practitioners can play a vital role in working with TSA to develop appropriate rules and regulations that will create a win-win situation to enhance the security of our transit systems. Here again the value of the Surface Transportation Security Inspector program can play a key role by bringing a global transportation security view to transit agencies who can then act locally to secure their transit systems.

In closing, I want to reiterate my support for TSA and the mission of the Surface Transportation Security Inspector program. Recent events continue to illustrate that we face a constant threat from those wishing to do us harm. While much of this threat and the security resources to respond have been directed at the aviation sector, history has clearly shown that mass transit continues to be a target of choice for terrorist attacks. We are confident that given the opportunity to work together with TSA on these important issues we can build strong relationships that will serve to greatly enhance the protection of our riding public, employees, and the systems they utilize on a daily basis. Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today and I will gladly answer any questions that you may have.